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## Scenarios Pose U.S.-Soviet War In Persian Gulf

Secret Pentagon planning documents raise the specter of a confrontation in the Persian Gulf between the United States and the Soviet Union. This is the sort of flash point that could ignite the nuclear powder keg.

Let me hastily explain that most strategists don't believe this will happen. They don't really expect the Iran-Iraq war to spread to the superpowers. They think sanity will somehow prevail, and we will muddle through the Persian Gulf crisis without Armageddon.

Most scenarios circulating inside the Pentagon also forecast an Iranian victory, followed by the spread of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Moslem fundamentalist revolution to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states. Unsettling as this would be, it probably wouldn't provoke a Soviet-American conflict.

But the opposite outcome—a desperate escalation of the war by Iraq, the destruction of Iran's oil-export facilities and the collapse of the Iranian economy—could embroil the Soviets. This is why the military chiefs have opposed President Rea-

gan's cautious "tilt" toward Iraq. But his national security affairs adviser, Robert C. McFarlane, wants an Iraqi victory in order to punish Khomeini and enhance U.S. Mideast power.

One hypothetical Pentagon scenario examined by my associate Donald Goldberg:

D-Day minus 65: The Iranian economy is in ruins, and the volatile Iranian people rise up against Khomeini and his mullahs, causing "dissolution of central authority in Iran."

Minus 62: "Soviet forces in Transcaucasus, north of Caucasus and Turkistan, begin selective mobilization." The United States responds by moving its "forward-deployed carrier and amphibious force" into better position.

Minus 37: The Kremlin "reaffirms" its 1921 friendship treaty with Iran and continues "preparations for invasion." The United States deploys additional Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) planes and naval forces.

Minus 23: U.S. intelligence reports up to 10 Soviet divisions conducting "training operations" on the Iranian border. Reagan calls up 100,000 reserve troops and puts U.S. forces around the world on low-level, DEFCON 3 alert. Supplies begin moving toward the Persian Gulf.

Minus 16: The Soviet Union announces "it is prepared to unilaterally invoke" the 1921 treaty, which permits Soviet troops to move into

Iran. U.S. intelligence detects a major increase of traffic on Soviet railroads in the provinces bordering Iran. Reagan "declares intent to do whatever necessary to protect U.S. vital interests." The worldwide alert is escalated to DEFCON 7 and military preparations are intensified.

Minus 12: Intelligence "determines that a Soviet invasion of Iran is imminent" and the United States begins "partial mobilization."

Minus 6: "Soviet forces depart assembly areas and move toward Iranian border." The Iranian military appeals for international help, and the United States "begins to deploy forces into Iran."

D-Day: Soviet air attacks "throughout Iran" pave the way for a massive invasion by 24 Soviet divisions. "U.S. and Soviet air forces engage in combat over Iran." U.S. intelligence detects "heightened Cuban readiness" and the United States "warns Cuba."

Plus 2: "U.S. determines Warsaw Pact preparations have reached levels that indicate an attack is likely" on western Europe. Washington calls for "formal NATO mobilization."

Plus 6: NATO mobilizes, and the United States rushes in "full-scale reinforcements."

Plus 16: Soviet bloc forces smash into western Europe with "at least 90 divisions." On the other side of the globe "North Korea attacks" South Korea. The fat is in the fire.